RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application is related to a series of other patent applications simultaneously filed with the present application on April 10, 2000. Those other patent applications include U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/545,652, entitled "METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR COMPOSING AND TRANSMITTING CONTENT-RICH COMMUNICATIONS" and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/545,649, entitled "METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR PROCESSING THE CONTENT OF CONTENT-RICH COMMUNICATIONS." This patent application and the noted other patent applications have common inventors and are assigned to a common entity.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to systems for distributed delivery of content-rich communications and, more particularly, to methods and systems for receiving and viewing a content-rich electronic mail message using a network of content servers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

With the rapid growth of the global Internet, the basic idea of two computers communicating over a network has evolved into a vest network of user nodes, routers, bridges, and servers. Electronic mail over such a network is rapidly becoming the preferred way many people communicate with others. Electronic mail facilitates communicating with those in the next room, in the house next door and across the globe in another country. It has become a staple means of communication in the business environment as well as at home. For example, business memos are now often sent via text within an electronic mail message ("email") and at the same time greatly anticipated news of a newborn may be sent to relatives in many different locations using email.

Email of today is typically text-only with the ability to add content via file attachments. Email is conventionally transmitted and received using standard mail protocols, such as Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) and Post Office Protocol (POP), respectively. SMTP is a protocol for sending email messages between mail